THE END™

MARVEL LIMITED SERIES

6 of 6

Fantastic Four®

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THE END

YEARS IN THE FUTURE, AFTER THE DEATHS OF FRANKLIN AND VALERIA RICHARDS, THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE NO LONGER MARVEL'S FIRST FAMILY...AS A MATTER OF FACT, THEY AREN'T MUCH OF A FAMILY AT ALL:

REED RICHARDS, MR. FANTASTIC, HAS BEEN SEQUESTERED AWAY FOR YEARS IN HIS HIGH-ORBITING SATELLITE, UNTIL HE IS AMBUSHED BY THE SUPER-SKRULL AND CAST INTO THE NEGATIVE ZONE AND THE CLUTCHES OF ANNIHILUS.

JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH AND BEN GRIMM, THE THING, DISCOVER REED'S LOCATION IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE AND SET OUT TO FIND HIM. AFTER A BRIEF SKIRMISH, THE THREE ESCAPE BACK TO REED'S SATELLITE, AS THE COMBINED FORCES OF THE AVENGERS AND INHUMANS BRACE FOR AN INVASION OF THE COMBINED SHI'AR AND KREE FORCES.

ELSEWHERE, SUE STORM, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN, ON AN ARCHEOLOGICAL QUEST DEEP BENEATH THE EARTH, OBTAINS A MYSTICAL ORB THAT SHE TAKES TO DR. STRANGE AND HIS DAUGHTER. THE THREE THEN TELEPORT TO REED'S SATELLITE WHERE SUE CAPTURES REED, JOHNNY AND BEN IN A FORCE-FIELD AND DEMANDS THAT THEY DO EXACTLY AS SHE ASKS...

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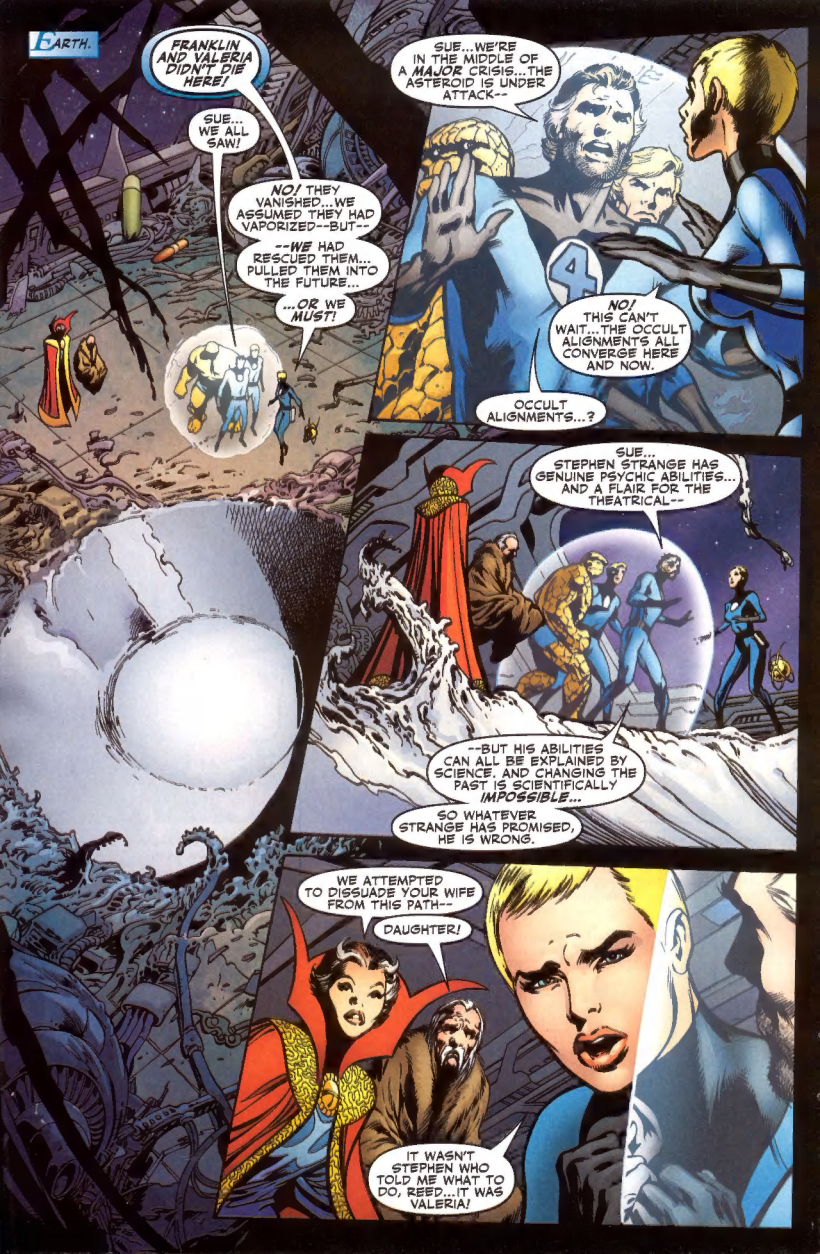
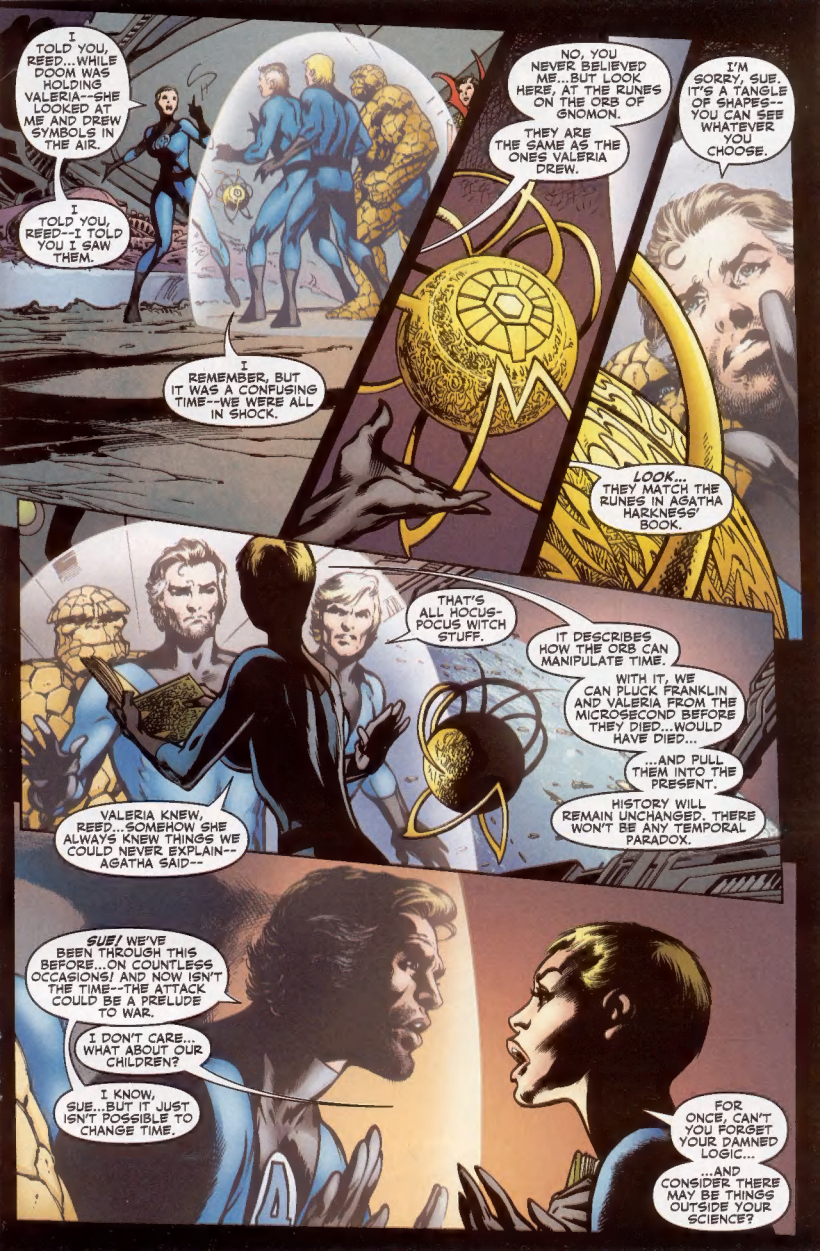

EARTH.
FRANKLIN AND VALERIA DIDN'T DIE HERE!
SUE... WE ALL SAW!
NO! THEY VANISHED...WE ASSUMED THEY HAD VAPORIZED--BUT--
--WE HAD RESCUED THEM... PULLED THEM INTO THE FUTURE...
...OR WE MUST!
SUE...WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAJOR CRISIS...THE ASTEROID IS UNDER ATTACK--
NO! THIS CAN'T WAIT...THE OCCULT ALIGNMENTS ALL CONVERGE HERE AND NOW.
OCCULT ALIGNMENTS...?
SUE... STEPHEN STRANGE HAS GENUINE PSYCHIC ABILITIES... AND A FLAIR FOR THE THEATRICAL--
--BUT HIS ABILITIES CAN ALL BE EXPLAINED BY SCIENCE. AND CHANGING THE PAST IS SCIENTIFICALLY IMPOSSIBLE...
SO WHATEVER STRANGE HAS PROMISED, HE IS WRONG.
WE ATTEMPTED TO DISSUADE YOUR WIFE FROM THIS PATH--
DAUGHTER!
IT WASN'T STEPHEN WHO TOLD ME WHAT TO DO, REED...IT WAS VALERIA!


I TOLD YOU, REED...WHILE DOOM WAS HOLDING VALERIA--SHE LOOKED AT ME AND DREW SYMBOLS IN THE AIR.
I TOLD YOU, REED--I TOLD YOU I SAW THEM.
I REMEMBER, BUT IT WAS A CONFUSING TIME--WE WERE ALL IN SHOCK.
NO, YOU NEVER BELIEVED ME...BUT LOOK HERE, AT THE RUNES ON THE ORB OF GNOMON.
THEY ARE THE SAME AS THE ONES VALERIA DREW.
I'M SORRY, SUE. IT'S A TANGLE OF SHAPES--YOU CAN SEE WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE.
LOOK... THEY MATCH THE RUNES IN AGATHA HARKNESS' BOOK.
THAT'S ALL HOCUS-POCUS WITCH STUFF.
IT DESCRIBES HOW THE ORB CAN MANIPULATE TIME.
WITH IT, WE CAN PLUCK FRANKLIN AND VALERIA FROM THE MICROSECOND BEFORE THEY DIED...WOULD HAVE DIED...
...AND PULL THEM INTO THE PRESENT.
HISTORY WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED. THERE WON'T BE ANY TEMPORAL PARADOX.
VALERIA KNEW, REED...SOMEHOW SHE ALWAYS KNEW THINGS WE COULD NEVER EXPLAIN--AGATHA SAID--
SUE! WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE...ON COUNTLESS OCCASIONS! AND NOW ISN'T THE TIME--THE ATTACK COULD BE A PRELUDE TO WAR.
I DON'T CARE... WHAT ABOUT OUR CHILDREN?
I KNOW, SUE...BUT IT JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE TO CHANGE TIME.
FOR ONCE, CAN'T YOU FORGET YOUR DAMNED LOGIC...
...AND CONSIDER THERE MAY BE THINGS OUTSIDE YOUR SCIENCE?

DON'T YOU THINK I KNOW HOW CRAZY IT ALL SOUNDS?
I'VE LIVED WITH THIS FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS WHILE I SEARCHED FOR THE ORB...
....CONSTANTLY EXPECTING TO RUN INTO A DEAD END AND BE PROVED A FOOL--
BUT THE ORB IS HERE! IT'S REAL!
PLEASE, REED, TRY TO BELIEVE THAT.
FOR OUR CHILDREN...FOR FRANKLIN AND VALERIA--
YOU DON'T NEED TO UNDERSTAND...YOU ONLY NEED TO BELIEVE...
JUST BELIEVE.
I'LL TRY.
I'M IN, TOO.
JUS' LIKE ALWAYS. WE'RE IN THIS T'GETHER.

THESE CURSED EARTH CHAMPIONS REFUSE TO YIELD!
WE NEED REINFORCEMENTS. IS THERE NO WORD FROM THE ARMADA?
NONE, MIGHTY ONE...
"...IS IT POSSIBLE THEY HAVE ENCOUNTERED SOME RESISTANCE?"
THANKS TO FURY'S SUSPICIOUS NATURE, MORE AVENGERS ARE ALREADY ARRIVING. BUT NOT ENOUGH TO TACKLE THIS FLEET.
TARGET THE BIG SHIPS. GUERILLA-STYLE--STAY CLOSE, INSIDE THEIR DEFENSES. THE FLEET CAN'T PASS US WHILE WE'RE A THREAT.
BEST WE CAN DO FOR THE FOLKS ON EARTH IS TO BUY THEM SOME TIME.

TIME FLOWS... TIME CURVES...TIME IS BUT A WRINKLE CURLED IN INFINITY.
FUTURE AND PAST, MERE FOLDS IN A SINGLE NOW.
IN THIS PLACE THE SOULS WHO WERE, ARE AGAIN.
LET THEIR WILL REND THE ILLUSION OF THEN AND NOW.
LET WHAT ONCE WAS, BE AGAIN.
IT'S STARTING, REED. I CAN FEEL IT.
IT'S GOING TO WORK.
SUE... PLEASE--
YOU HAVE TO...BE CALM--
NO... IT WILL WORK.
LEAVE MY DAD ALONE!
WHU...?
FRANKLIN... VALERIA!
YOU DON'T SCARE ME, UGLYFACE!

HOLD ON, HONEY, STEPHEN WARNED US TO STAY BACK.
POWER DOWN, FRANKLIN.
HOLD FAST, DAUGHTER.
ANGRY POWER RAGES WITHOUT CONSTRAINT.
THE MOMENT OF ANNIHILATION IS UPON US.
I MUST PREVENT IT FROM COALESCING...
"...UNTIL THE LETHAL ENERGY...
"...CAN DISSIPATE HARMLESSLY...
"...INTO THE LIMBO OF INFINITY."

WHAT'S HAPPENING... THE POWER-- DRAINING...
YEAH... WELL, I GOT PLENTY MORE!
NO! FRANK, STOP FIGHTING...
...IT'S TIME TO GO.
WHU...?
IT TOOK A FEW YEARS, BUT I'VE HAD TIME. DECADES!
RICHARDS... RECOVERED?
NO...THIS IS ANOTHER TRICK. ANOTHER OF THE LITTLE WITCH'S ILLUSIONS.

THIS AIN'T NO ILLUSION, DOOM. YOU'RE IN THE FUTURE--
THE WAR'S LONG OVER AN' WE AIN'T GONNA LET YOU SPOIL THINGS.
DON'T HURT HIM, BEN. THERE'S NO NEED FOR US TO FIGHT.
YOU EXPECT ME TO SURRENDER?
NEVER!
KRAW
YOU PSYCHO! WE WERE TRYING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE FOR PEACE!
I AM DOOM! I CARE NOTHING FOR PEACE. I WAS BORN TO RULE...
...AND ANY WHO OPPOSE ME WILL DIE!

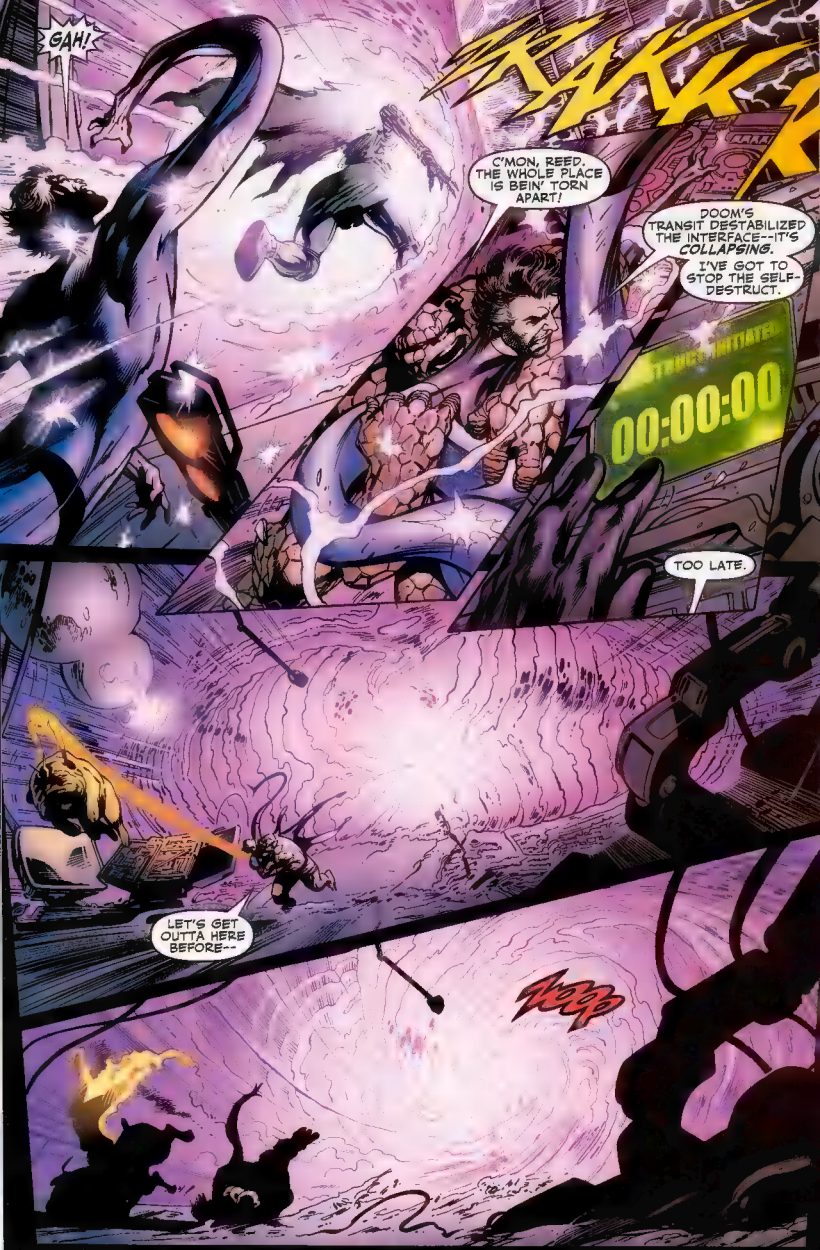
THESE SENTRY ROBOTS AREN'T NEAR AS TOUGH AS THE SUPER-SIZE MODEL, BUT THEY'RE EVERYWHERE.
...DRIVEN BACK TO THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ARK AND INTO THE FIRING LINE OF A PLANET-BLASTER.
THE PATTERN OF SENTRY ATTACK IS NOT RANDOM. WE ARE BEING HERDED...
FURY TO EARTH FORCES. THE ARK IS WITHOUT PROPULSION. WE'RE SITTING DUCKS...
...ANYONE WHO HAS THE CAPACITY TO GET OUT OF HARM'S WAY SHOULD BAIL NOW!
NICK, THERE'S A NEW ENERGY SPIKE... OUT PAST THE ARMADA...
...AND IT'S HUGE.
OD'S BLOOD!
JUST WHEN Y'THINK THINGS CAN'T GET ANY SCARIER.

HENCEFORTH, ANY WHO THREATEN THIS SOLAR SYSTEM SHALL MAKE AN ENEMY OF GALACTUS!
GO NOW!

LOOK OUTSIDE, VICTOR. TRUST YOUR OWN SENSES. THIS IS THE FUTURE.
YOUR FUTURE!
SO YOU THINK YOU HAVE WON? THAT I AM BEATEN?
AIN'T ABOUT WINNING.
FACT IS, YOU'RE WORN OUT AND WE'RE FRESH...
KRONG
...AN' STRONGER THAN EVER.
YOU ALWAYS WERE STRONGER. BUT YOU WERE AFRAID TO BE RUTHLESS.
KKRAKKK
SKOW
THE FLOOR...

SEE SENSE, VICTOR. THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS.
YOU THINK I WOULD BE PART OF YOUR WORLD...
...BLAND, STAGNANT, COMFORTABLE-- A WORLD FOR THE WEAK AND FRIGHTENED...
NEVER! I AM DOOM.
AKK
WHO
YOU'RE A VICIOUS MAD DOG.
STAY BACK, REED. LET ME TAKE HIM.
COME... HURRY TO YOUR DEATH, BOY.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH I'M HOLDING BACK.
I COULD EASILY BURN THROUGH YOUR FORCE-FIELDS AND COOK YOU INSIDE YOUR ARMOR.
AHK! I WILL KILL YOU ALL!

JOHN, PULL BACK. THOSE CONDUITS CHANNEL POWER TO THE NEGATIVE ZONE GATE.
YOUR DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY--THE SOURCE OF MUCH OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY, I SUSPECT.
NO, VICTOR, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, I'VE INITIATED THE--
SKREEEE


GAH!
KAKK
C'MON, REED. THE WHOLE PLACE IS BEIN' TORN APART!
DOOM'S TRANSIT DESTABILIZED THE INTERFACE--IT'S COLLAPSING.
I'VE GOT TO STOP THE SELF-DESTRUCT.
00:00:00
TOO LATE.
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE--
KOOP

PLUTOSPACE.
WELL, I GUESS THAT'LL BE THE END OF OUR QUARANTINE PERIOD.
THE KREE AND SHI'AR ATTACKED WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE GALACTIC COUNCIL, SO EARTH WON'T SUFFER ANY SANCTIONS.
NOR WILL THEY RISK ATTRACTING THE DISFAVOR OF OUR NEW ALLY.
AYE, GRATEFUL THOUGH I BE THAT YON ANCIENT SCOURGE SHOULD ACT SO BENEFICENTLY... 'TIS BAFFLING STRANGE!
MAYBE HE LIKES US?
ONLY AS HORS D'OEUVRES!
WE WERE SAVED...ALL HUMAN CIVILIZATION RESCUED FROM THE BRINK. THE REASON AIN'T IMPORTANT...
...WE'VE BEEN GIVEN ANOTHER CHANCE, A CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING WORTHWHILE. AND ALL THAT MATTERS IS WE DON'T WASTE IT.

THE GATE'S GONE...IF DOOM SURVIVED, HE'LL BE TRAPPED IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
IT WAS DOOM'S OWN CHOICE, REED. Y'DID WHAT Y'COULD...AND FAR MORE THAN DOOM DESERVED.
JOHN?!
CRYSTAL, ARE YOU OKAY? WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO HELP OUT IN THE DOCKING BAY, BUT WE GOT SIDETRACKED... IS IT OVER?
RONAN, THE COWARDLY KREE CUR, FLED WHEN HIS REINFORCEMENTS FAILED TO ARRIVE.
LOCKJAW'S GOOD--JUST A BIT GROGGY FROM HAVING A NAP.
I KNEW YOU'D TAKE CARE OF HIM...IT WAS YOU I WAS WORRIED ABOUT.
YOU WERE?
IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT? IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS A MAJOR FRACAS.
YEAH. IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I WAS IN A FIGHT LIKE THAT.
DECADES!
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN IN A FIGHT LIKE THAT.
WELL, JUST DON'T TELL THE KIDS--WE'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT IF THE BUG SQUAD THINK WE'VE BEEN HAVING "ADVENTURES".

I'M REALLY SORRY YOU WERE ALL DRAGGED INTO THIS MESS.
I'M SURE WE CAN PIECE THE WHOLE STORY TOGETHER LATER, REED. RIGHT NOW, I NEED A GOOD BATH AND A LOOONG NAP.
WAIT UP, JEN. I RECKON YOU'LL WANT TO STAY AND SEE THE PAYOFF.
DADDY, DADDY, DADDY...
THANK YOU, SUE. THANK YOU... CAN YOU FORGIVE ME FOR--
OF COURSE-- I LOVE YOU... ANYWAY... IT'S ALL HISTORY NOW--

WE HAVE A FUTURE... TOGETHER.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THIS WAS WHAT YOU WERE DOING, REED?
NOT ME, IT WAS ALL SUE...

...AND STEPHEN. I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO THANK YOU ENOUGH... OR TO ADEQUATELY APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT I SAID--
WORDS THAT MELTED AWAY IN THE LIGHT OF TRUTH.
DON'T FORGET TO PROPERLY DISPOSE OF THE ORB, STEPHEN. IT COULD BE DANGEROUS IN THE WRONG HANDS.
VERY WISE, VALERIA.
AND THANKS FOR PULLING ME AND FRANK THROUGH TIME.
YOU UNDERSTAND YOU ARE IN THE FUTURE?
SURE. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE US. I TOLD FRANK WHAT I SAW.
THAT'S WHY WE DISOBEYED YOU AND JOINED THE FIGHT. YOU'D HAVE DIED IF WE DIDN'T, BUT WE KNEW WE'D BE OKAY.
IT WAS ALL MIXED UP IN MY FUTURE DREAM--BUT I KNEW IT WAS HOW THE END WOULD HAPPEN.
THE END...?
THE END OF CRISES AND DANGER-- SO WE CAN JUST BE A FAMILY NOW.
ANYWAY, NOW THAT WE'VE PROVED OURSELVES, THERE ARE SIX OF US IN THE TEAM.
THERE'LL BE *NINE* ONCE DANIEL, JACOB AND YANCY GET WIND OF THIS.
SHEESH... I KNEW THIS UTOPIA THING WAS TOO GOOD T'BE TRUE.
NOT NINE, UNCLE JOHN, *SIXTEEN*...
...OR THERE WILL BE WHEN YOU AND CRYSTAL HAVE YOUR SEVEN CHILDREN.
AND AS ONE STORY ENDS...

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
DOOM
BOOM
BOOM
...another begins